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3-10-2009

**March 10, 2009**

University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate

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#### **Recommended Citation**

University of Mississippi. Faculty Senate, "March 10, 2009" (2009). *Meeting Minutes*. 88.  
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Senators in Attendance:

Deborah Barker, Robert Barnard, Mark Bing, Jan Bounds, Steve Brewer, Allison Burkette, Joe Turner Cantu, Yixin Chen, Ben Cooper, Lucien Cremaldi, Donna Davis, Charles Eagles, Allison Ford-Wade, Judy Greenwood, Mary Hayes, Erin Holmes, Brad Jones, Jason Klodt, P.T. Krantz, Joel Kuszmaul, Elise Lake, Laurel Lambert, John Lobur, Soumyajit Majumdar, Tyrus McCarty, Carmen Manning Miller, Jessica Minihan, Debra Moore-Shannon, John Neff, Tim Nordstrom, Cesar Rego, Jason Ritchie, Angela Rutherford, Jesse Scott, Zia Shariat-Madar, Ken Sufka, Durant Thompson, Laura Vaughn, Doug Vorhies, Mark Walker, Karl Wang, Jay Watson, Thea Williams-Black, Jordan Zjawiony

Senators absent with prior notification:

Ricky Burkhead, Melissa Dennis, George Dor

Senators absent without notification:

Bill Chappell, Elliot Hutchcraft, Chris Mullen, Paul Scovazzo, John Williamson

- Meeting opened by the Chair, Ken Sufka at 7:00 p.m.
- First order of business: Approve February minutes
  - Motioned & seconded; approved unanimously with no abstentions
- Second order of business: Presentation on university budget cuts, revenue streams, and implementation scenarios by Mr. Larry Sparks, Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance
  - Chair Sufka prefaced the conversation by stating that the intent of this update is for the Senate to stay informed on how the it can best respond to future budget cuts
  - Larry Sparks began his remarks by explaining the two recent budget cuts (2% in November 2008, 3% in January 2009)
    - The administration looked at where it could cut expenses and examined its revenue streams; the administration absorbed the 2% November 2008 cut centrally and thus they had little effect on academic departments
    - UM is planning in conjunction with State's economist to prepare for future budget cuts; the goal is to look at the budget holistically and to be proactive in financial planning
    - The federal stimulus bill will likely restore UM's budget to pre-2009 levels
    - Larger economic factors (such as deflation, and credit scarcity) are certainly affecting UM, and there is still a question of where UM will be in another year; the federal Stabilization Plan will be in effect for only one year
    - According to Mr. Sparks, indications from the Governor's office are that "we are not on his mind"
  - Mr. Sparks opened the floor to questions and comments

- Senator Richie asked about a grass roots campaign to lobby the Governor, to send a message through students' parents
    - Mr. Sparks replied that UM is seen as elite and not grass roots
    - Senator Richie expressed concerns that community colleges were benefitting at the university's expense
    - Mr. Sparks agreed with Senator Richie's assessment
- Chair Sufka asked if UM maintained the 2009-2010 level of funding, what would be the tenor of the IHL on the funding formula
  - Mr. Sparks responded that UM would be lucky to get formula money until the economic crisis was averted; politics had kept the formula from being brought up over the last several years. When IHL does implement the formula UM will get money from other institutions
- Senator Barker asked if currently frozen faculty lines will remain frozen
  - Mr. Sparks responded that the decision is left to the deans, since lines are not frozen from a central level
  - Additionally, the university is in a "wait and see mode"; due to posturing by the Governor and other politicians, UM is still waiting to receive federal funds
- Senator Brewer asked about funding coming through grants
  - Mr. Sparks replied that there are many different controllers of the funds from block grants and research money; how these funds will go from the federal treasury to UM has yet to be determined
- Chair Sufka asked how the 23% (at 2008) state appropriation of total operations is being affected
  - Mr. Sparks responded that the core budget appropriations (for teaching and classrooms) represent 40% of the budget, or \$205 million, to cover day to day expenses; UM will ask for some level of tuition increase, but not an unreasonable level considering the current economic climate
  - UM normally receives \$8 million from endowments, but this year it is only expecting to receive \$4 million from endowments; the university has been aggressive in courting more monies to get through the economic downturn and to continue to fund scholarships
  - Tuition represents 53-54% of the budget; as UM has grown, state appropriations have not kept up
  - In the Operations account, next year UM will likely lose 125 basis points on its investments
- Mr. Sparks explained some of the secrets of state appropriations: the key number is how much money is collected (not how much is appropriated) and the state treasurer has played games with the numbers; UM has been down \$1.1 million in state funding, and will be likely be down \$1.4 million this year
  - Another secret: why is UM only getting 95% of its appropriation? Mr. Sparks is investigating why
  - UM expects a \$200,000 decrease in premiums
- UM is doing well conserving energy; the generation plant has made deals with TVA so that it can sell excess power; being on standby for the TVA earns UM \$100,000 per month

- The construction in the Circle: heating had been accomplished by steam tunnels, which were highly inefficient; crews are now installing hot water pipes, which will save 15% on natural gas consumption
    - Mr. Sparks remarked that these changes are not glamorous, but they represent real savings for UM
  - Senator Richie asked how the budget for athletics has grown compared to the larger UM budget
    - Mr. Sparks replied that he did not know, but he estimated that it probably has grown in lock step, if not faster, than the university's budget; the UM budget is on file in library for anyone to consult
  - Senator Nordstrom will meet with the Finance Committee to formulate the next steps that the Senate will take
- Third order of business: Senate Committee on Academic Affairs presentation of obstacles, benefits, costs, and consequences of +/- grading
  - Senator Richie outlined the pros & cons of +/- grading implementation in the region
  - Pros: it would promote a meritocracy in the grading system (rewarding students who have earned higher grades and providing distinctions among grades)
    - 75% of Senators are in favor of such a system
    - It would better reflect students' progress and performance, and possibly lead to higher GPAs
    - The new Chancellor may side with faculty on this issue and not with ASB
  - Cons: cost issues (rewriting software databases, learning curves for students & faculty, increased time and effort for professors with large sections)
    - The number of bellyaching students that question their grades could increase
    - It would represent a fundamental change in grading and the Senate is not sure if it has support from the institution
    - There is no possibility for incremental change
    - Some faculty currently do not use the full grading scale (there are professors that do not assign Ds and Fs)
    - It may result in a net negative decrease in GPA, inciting student opposition
  - Academic freedom arguments
    - The ABCDF scale masks an idiosyncratic grading system
    - With a 5 grade system, grades are more qualitative; with an 11 grade +/- system, faculty might have to adopt a more quantitative scheme such that the "tail is wagging the dog"
    - Students may shop for easier classes
  - Political factors: the Senate has finite political capital; is the Senate up for a fight that would have little support from students and may distract from other issues?
  - At the University of Kentucky, some faculty refuse to use the +/- grading system
  - Unresolved questions
    - From a transcript, how would one know if the scale uses +/- grading?
    - What is the percentage of faculty that would actually use it?
    - What time and financial investments would be required?

- Would there be a return on investment? Would it increase the quality of our teaching?
- Senator Brewer suggested that the Senate consider implementing both letter grades and percentage grades on transcripts
- Senator Lobur made arguments in support of +/- grading, asserting that such a system encourages fairness, academic freedom, and student achievement
  - The inconveniences of adopting +/- grading would be short term and would pass
  - It could assuage bellyaching on the part of students
  - Schools and professors could continue using the ABCDF system, and no one would force it on professors
  - If an A+ earned more than 4.0, it would assuage some students' complaints
  - All grades are implicitly quantitative anyway
  - It would be a stimulus for achievement (for students to earn higher grades, it would be an incentive for students to improve) and would improve morale among professors
  - The current system is too blunt and unfair in distinguishing between a low B and a high B; it would also help students stand out against their peers
  - It would increase the quality of applicants to UM and would improve the academic cachet of grades earned at UM
- Senator Nordstrom asked how many schools give above a 4.0 for an A+
  - Senator Richie responded that it is rare
- Question from the floor: would +/- grading lead to softer courses?
  - Senator Barnard responded that as grades become more fine grained, there may be a tendency for students to seek professors that assign higher grades, encouraging a model of students as consumers of classes that are seeking certain grades
- Senator Neff commented that +/- grading gives professors a more attuned measurement, and asked if there is evidence that the ABCDF scale has affected applications for admission at other institutions
  - Senator Barnard responded that there are practical reasons not to use +/- grading, such as the costs involved in the change
  - Senator Davis commented that the Law School already gives + grades, thus SAP has this capability; the point of grading is to make distinctions among students and professors are assessing their performance anyway; also there is a consistent system in law school admissions for measuring performance at various institutions
- Senator Lake suggested using a decimal point system such as that used at other universities
  - Senator Vorhies commented Marketing already uses a decimal point system, and further suggested that it may be advantageous to approach the new Chancellor with the +/- grading issue
- Senator Vorhies asked how it would affect the quality of learning
  - It may provide students a motivation to achieve more
- Senator Thompson mentioned that the only complaints he hears are when students

- compare the amount of effort they put into earning a grade compared to the effort that their classmates may have invested in earning a different grade
  - Senator Eagles asked about the grading system at the medical school
    - Senator Shariat-Madar responded that the medical school uses pass/fail grading
  - Senator Brewer suggested that a greater number of students would complain if there were finer distinctions between grades
  - Chair Sufka made a motion to adopt a resolution to be written for the April meeting
    - Senator Richie asked for a straw poll of the Senate to gauge support for +/- grading
      - A majority voted in favor
    - Senator Lobur will write a resolution and will distribute it to Senators to gather feedback from their departments
    - Senator Vorhies asked if the Senate could confirm the costs of implementing +/- grading
      - Chair Sufka responded that he will get information from the Registrar & Kathy Gates
- Fourth order of business: Resolution 1: Provost Search
  - Senator Davis provided background on the resolution, explaining that the Faculty Senate Governance committee expressed frustration with the lack of a national search for Provost; Senator Davis emphasized that this resolution is not a criticism of Provost Stocks, just the process used to select him
    - Senator Davis observed that the faculty was not kept adequately informed of the Provost search process, that it was inappropriate to hire the Provost position without a completed search, and the new Chancellor may want to choose his/her own team
    - The text of the resolution:

#### Provost Search Faculty Senate Resolution

Whereas: The search for the position of Provost was terminated and a permanent appointment of a Provost was made without following appropriate University policies and procedures;

The Senate expressed only last year a concern that “irregularities and inconsistencies in the creation of administrative positions in the hiring, appointment, and evaluation of university administrators—arguably in violation of the university’s agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor concerning interim administrative appointments—have worked to deny faculty appropriate representation and influence in these procedures;

Making a permanent hire after a truncated search prevents the formation of a new committee for a national search that would allow for appropriate faculty representation and influence in the selection of a Provost;

A failure to complete a national search devalues and undermines legitimacy of the Office of the Provost;

The appointment of an internal candidate without comparison to other candidates weakens the perceived strength and authority of the internal hire; and

The recent appointment of a permanent Provost potentially undermines the ability of our next Chancellor to select his or her own administrative team.

Thus, the Faculty Senate requests that the current Provost position be returned to the status of an Acting Position, and a new search committee be formed by the new Chancellor for the hiring of a Provost after a full and complete search process.

- The floor was opened to discussion
  - Senator Ford-Wade asked if all members on the Governance committee supported the resolution
    - Senator Davis replied that dissent was not voiced and that the majority of the committee voted in favor of it
  - Senator Richie asked if the committee was not unhappy with person in the job, what was the point of the resolution if not to give a “kick in the ass” to the Provost and the Chancellor
    - Senator Davis responded that the appropriate process was not followed, and thus faculty do not know if the best candidate was selected; Senator Davis reiterated that UM should follow its own procedures
  - Senator Walker asked if the new Chancellor didn’t want Morris Stocks to be Provost, could s/he replace him
    - The Chancellor could in fact replace Morris Stocks
  - Senator Vorhies expressed concerns about “collateral damage,” in that possibly angering the current Provost could bring negative repercussions on the faculty
  - Senator Vaughn asked if there was not in fact a national search for Provost
    - Senator Davis replied that the search was aborted and other applicants were not considered
  - Senator Neff suggested that as UM approaches a change in leadership, the Senate should send a message that UM will adhere to the institution’s rules
  - Senator Barker asked if the Senate could propose a resolution that does not call for the removal or demotion of the current Provost
    - Chair Sufka replied that the resolution is presented as is, and will be voted on in its current form
  - Senator Eagles commented that this hire was not the first instance of faculty being promised a search but no search was in fact carried out; this practice violates faculty governance
  - Senator Watson stressed the governance issue of the resolution: though the personal dimension may be uncomfortable, as hard as the Senate has

fought for shared governance, faculty's acquiescence sends a bad message to the Chancellor

- Senator Vorhies remarked that if the Senate were to censure the Chancellor and not the Provost, he would vote for it
- Comment from the floor: It is difficult to remove the personal issue from the resolution
- Senator Eagles called the question
- Chair Sufka read the following statement:

### Provost Resolution Response

The main principle/argument is one of faculty governance. The UM Faculty have endured over the years a pattern of decision-making at the highest levels of university leadership that, at best, marginalized faculty input, and at worst, ignored it altogether. Faculty participation in national searches ensures that we can select in a person, the kinds of qualities and characteristics, that will shape positively the future of this University through an open process of shared governance in which dialogues are thoughtful, honest, respectful. Appointments that bypass these processes do not uphold this principle of shared governance and, in many instances, fail in the desired outcome.

In the Fall Term we started a National Search for a Provost and that search had significant faculty representation. The decision to conduct a National Search was at the strong urging of the very person sitting in the position today along with the persuasive voice of the Faculty Senate. Please note that after Dr. Staton's resignation over a year ago, Dr. Stocks actually refused an offer of an appointment to this position. Authority from any Provost would necessitate being selected by the faculty among a national pool of candidates; where Dr. Stocks would be in that pool should he seriously consider applying, which was never a given, was unknown to him or any of us on the search committee. Prior to the announced retirement of Chancellor Khayat, we had 36 applications for the position and prior to the cancellation of the search, I reviewed every single one passing or not their candidacy to Stage Two Screening and then ranking those to develop a short list. Not knowing how many names I would be asked to submit as candidates for campus interviews, 5 or 3 or even 2, I can say that Dr. Stocks name was on each of these short lists. However, it would be difficult to argue that the university should have proceeded with that national search given the unexpected circumstances of our university facing a search for a new Chancellor.

One interesting argument is that this appointment undermines the Provost's authority. During this economic downturn where IHL/State appropriations are being cut by double digits, holding an interim appointment as these cuts are implemented places the person responsible for these matters in an untenable position. The argument fails in context of these times of cuts during leadership transitions.

Further, what this resolution fails to consider is context of a new Chancellor being appointed, this university needing stability and wisdom in difficult times, the very short



length of this 2-year appointment and, perhaps most importantly, the unassailable characteristics of the person placed into the Provost position.

What I find most alarming in this resolution, and let me be very clear about this, is the willingness to sacrifice the desired outcome of a principle by rigidly holding onto that principle. And this is politically naïve and quite short-sighted. You have in a sitting Provost, a person that more fully embraces the principle of faculty input in decision-making processes than any before. For those of you that have worked with Provost Stocks or that would simply ask those of us that have, would come away with the knowledge that his administrative philosophy is one of transparency, honesty, respect and shared governance.

Voting for this resolution will surely have a broader impact than on the intended target of Chancellor Khayat and an outcome that the majority of the faculty you represent would not want to face. A major void in highly effective leadership and potential loss of shared governance during one of the most difficult time we face at this university would be unfortunate and could have the potential to lead us astray from the central mission of this University.

Again, are you willing to sacrifice the desired outcome of a principle by rigidly holding onto that principle? It is for these reasons that I urge my Senate colleagues to think carefully about how to cast your vote on this resolution.

- Senator Sufka called the question
  - The senate voted against Resolution 1: 14 in favor, 27 opposed, and 2 abstentions
- Fifth order of business: Resolution 2: Voluntary Salary Reduction
  - Motioned & seconded to discuss the resolution
  - The text of the resolution:

Voluntary Salary Reduction  
Faculty Senate Resolution

If the people employed at the university are indeed, as Chancellor Khayat has repeatedly insisted, part of the Ole Miss family, we should in these hard economic times take care of each other, our brothers and sisters; we should not sacrifice a few of the most defenseless at the bottom for the security and comfort of everyone else. The burdens and sacrifices cannot, of course, be shared equally because everyone does not have the same resources.

The Faculty Senate, therefore, proposes that, before the university reduces any staffing levels (to include faculty and staff; full-time and part-time; temporary, contract, and adjunct employees), the university should enact progressive wage and salary reductions (to include all compensation received as university employees) on individual compensation above \$35,000 per year to meet budget shortfalls. Such progressive cuts should be only a last resort before the elimination of jobs and positions.

- Senator Walker questioned the necessity of the resolution in light of Mr. Sparks's comments earlier in the meeting
  - Senator Eagles responded that a year ago most did not realize that the economic situation would be so negative; the principle is that for those earning over \$75,000 per year, it would cost \$1 per day
  - Senator Sufka observed that, since it meets once per month, the Senate was having difficulty keeping up with UM's rapidly shifting financial circumstances
- Senator Eagles reiterated that this resolution represents a contingency plan if the budget situation worsens and remarked that this resolution is the Senate's chance to voice its opinion before budget decisions are made over the summer months when the Senate does not meet
- Senator Thompson suggested that the Senate table the resolution
- Senator Brewer commented that the first phrase of the resolution is off-putting
  - Senator Eagles responded that he would be willing to cut the phrase
- Senator Barker asked what "all compensation" meant in light of federal grants
  - Senator Eagles responded that he wants to target the highest wage earners in the university
- Question from the floor to explain the word "Voluntary" in resolution's title
  - Chair Sufka explained that "Voluntary" refers to the question itself of the salary reduction being voluntary
- Senator Walker asked that, since deans and chairs make salary decisions, does Senate have the authority propose such a resolution?
  - Senator Eagles affirmed that the Senate can in fact voice whatever opinion it wishes
- Senator Barnard expressed hesitancy to vote on his colleagues' salaries during a time of economic struggle
  - Senator Eagles responded that the resolution aims to protect the most vulnerable employees at UM; if the budget cuts go deep, even whole departments may become vulnerable
- Senator Eagles requested a roll call vote on the resolution
- Roll call vote on Resolution 2:

|                   | Absent | In Favor | Opposed | Abstained |
|-------------------|--------|----------|---------|-----------|
| Barker, Deborah   |        | X        |         |           |
| Barnard, Robert   |        |          | X       |           |
| Bing, Mark        |        |          | X       |           |
| Bounds, Jan       |        |          | X       |           |
| Brewer, Steve     |        |          | X       |           |
| Burkette, Allison |        |          | X       |           |
| Burkhead, Ricky   | X      |          |         |           |
| Chappell, Bill    | X      |          |         |           |
| Chen, Yixin       |        |          | X       |           |
| Cooper, Ben       |        | X        |         |           |
| Cremaldi, Lucien  |        | X        |         |           |
| Davis, Donna      |        | X        |         |           |

|                        |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Dennis, Melissa        | X |   |   |   |
| Dor, George            | X |   |   |   |
| Eagles, Charles        |   | X |   |   |
| Ford-Wade, Allison     |   |   | X |   |
| Greenwood, Judy        |   |   | X |   |
| Hayes, Mary            |   | X |   |   |
| Holmes, Erin           |   |   |   | X |
| Hutchcraft, Elliot     | X |   |   |   |
| Jones, Brad            |   |   | X |   |
| Klodt, Jason           |   |   | X |   |
| Krantz, P.T.           |   |   | X |   |
| Kuszmaul, Joel         |   |   | X |   |
| Lake, Elise            |   | X |   |   |
| Lambert, Laurel        |   |   | X |   |
| Lobur, John            |   |   | X |   |
| Majumdar, Soumyajit    |   |   |   | X |
| Manning-Miller, Carmen |   | X |   |   |
| McCarty, Tyrus         |   | X |   |   |
| Minihan, Jessica       |   |   |   | X |
| Moore-Shannon, Debra   |   | X |   |   |
| Mullen, Chris          | X |   |   |   |
| Neff, History          |   | X |   |   |
| Nordstrom, Tim         |   |   | X |   |
| Rego, Cesar            |   |   | X |   |
| Ritchie, Jason         |   |   | X |   |
| Rutherford, Angela     |   |   | X |   |
| Scott, Jesse           |   |   | X |   |
| Scovazzo, Paul         | X |   |   |   |
| Shariat-Madar, Zia     |   |   |   | X |
| Sufka, Ken             |   |   | X |   |
| Thompson, Durant       |   |   | X |   |
| Turner-Cantu, Joe      |   |   | X |   |
| Vaughn, Laura          |   |   |   | X |
| Vorhies, Doug          |   |   | X |   |
| Walker, Mark           |   |   | X |   |
| Wang, Karl             |   |   | X |   |
| Watson, Jay            |   | X |   |   |
| Williams-Black, Thea   |   |   |   | X |
| Williamson, John       | X |   |   |   |
| Zjawiony, Jordan       |   |   | X |   |

- The senate voted against Resolution 2: 12 in favor, 26 opposed, and 6 abstentions
- Sixth order of business: Notification to Chairs of Senate Elections

- Chair Sufka informed the Senate that April 1 is the deadline by which department chairs need to hold elections to fill Senate seats for 2009-2010
- Eligible Faculty to serve as Senators are budget listed, full-time, tenured or tenure-track employees of The University of Mississippi (Oxford campus) who hold the rank of Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor
- Eligible Faculty does not include the following: 1) Part-time faculty fully engaged in teaching University classes, 2) Instructors, 3) Support faculty including Acting Professors, Adjunct Professors, Visiting Professors, Research Professors (i.e. Research Associate and Assistant Professors and Research Associates), and Lecturers & 4) Assistant or associate deans, deans, vice chancellors/Provost, the Chancellor, or those holding other administrative positions outside of the academic departments or the libraries
- Terms are for one year and run from September 1, 2009, through August 31, 2010, with an organizational meeting held in August. A senator may serve up to four continuous years of service then must rotate off for one year.
- Seventh order of business: Items from the floor
  - Chair Sufka announced that the Robert Khayat retirement event is scheduled for Thursday, April 30, 2009, from 3 to 5 pm.
  - As a retirement gift to the outgoing Chancellor, trees will be planted in the Grove and Circle in his honor
  - Donations can be made to the UM Foundation, specifying that the donation is for the Khayat tree fund
  - The remaining Senate meeting dates for 2008-2009 are April 14 & May 5
- Meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.